

# **SELECTION STATEMENT**

## **FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND RESEARCH SUPPORT SERVICES (STARSS) PROCUREMENT**

On September, 15, 2006, I met with the NASA Source Evaluation Board (SEB) appointed to evaluate proposals for the STARSS procurement. The SEB presentation included the procurement history, the evaluation procedures, and results of the evaluation of the proposals received.

### **BACKGROUND**

The STARSS procurement will result in the award of a single contract to provide NASA Langley Research Center with research and development support in the functional areas of Earth and Planetary Atmospheric Sciences, Research and Technology and Data Center Services.

The contract will be an Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ), Cost-Plus-Award-Fee (CPAF) contract. The period of performance will be 60 months inclusive of a 1 month phase-in period followed by 59 months of contract performance. The guaranteed minimum is \$500,000 for the contract. The maximum value is \$140M for the 60 month period of performance.

The STARSS Draft Request for Proposal (DRFP) was released on March 15, 2006. A Pre-Solicitation Conference was held on April 7, 2006. The final RFP was released on May 2, 2006 via the NASA Acquisition Information System (NAIS) and FedBizOpps. Past Performance Proposals (Volume 3) were received on June 5, 2006. The Mission Suitability Proposals (Technical-Volume 1) and the Cost Proposals (Business-Volume 2) were received on June 19, 2006. Proposals were received from the following five offerors (listed in alphabetical order by company acronym):

**Analytical Services and Materials, Inc. (AS&M)**

**Caelum Research Corporation (CRC)**

**Global Science and Technology, Inc. (GST)**

**Science Systems and Applications, Inc. (SSAI)**

**Science and Technology Corporation (STC)**

### **EVALUATION CRITERIA, PROCEDURES and FINDINGS**

**Criteria-**Prior to the issuance of the RFP, I as the Source Selection Authority (SSA), appointed an SEB to conduct an evaluation of proposals received in response to the RFP. The RFP stated in Section M.2.A, "Proposals received in response to this solicitation will be evaluated by a NASA Source Evaluation Board in accordance with NASA FAR Supplement (NFS) 1815.3. Mission Suitability will be scored. Cost and Past Performance will not be scored." The SEB evaluated proposals based on Section M of the RFP, including an adjectival and numerical scoring system for Mission Suitability Subfactors. The RFP set forth the following three evaluation factors, which I approved.

- Factor 1 – Mission Suitability
- Factor 2 – Cost/Price Analysis
- Factor 3 – Past Performance

Factor 1 Mission Suitability included three subfactors, the most important of which was Understanding the Requirements. The weights used in the scoring of the Mission Suitability subfactors are presented below:

<u>Mission Suitability Subfactors</u>	<u>Weights</u>
1. Understanding the Requirements	500 points
2. Management Plan & Organizational Structure	400 points
3. Safety and Health Plan	100 points

The numerical weights assigned to the above Mission Suitability subfactors are indicative of the relative importance of those evaluation areas. The RFP states in Section M.4.B, that "Overall, in the selection of contractor(s) for the contract award, Mission Suitability, Cost, and Past Performance will be of essentially equal importance. All evaluation factors other than Cost, when combined, are significantly more important than Cost."

**Procedures-**Upon receipt of the Past Performance proposals, the SEB Chairman and the Contracting Officer prepared a listing of the contractors and subcontractors proposing on the STARSS RFP. Prior to SEB or consultant access to the proposals, all SEB Members, consultants and Ex-Officio members reviewed the list of offerors (including subcontractors) and were asked to identify any conflicts of interest. In addition, the Office of Chief Counsel reviewed all SEB members and consultants Financial Disclosure Statement (OG 450) to confirm no potential or perceived conflict of interest existed. Based on this review, all participants were cleared for participation on the SEB.

In accordance with Section M of the RFP, the SEB conducted a thorough review of each Past Performance proposal and evaluated relevant experience and performance based on the offeror's written narrative, customer questionnaires, NASA Form (NF) 1680 Past Performance Database information and the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS). Each member of the SEB performed an individual review of each offeror's proposal (in alphabetical order of the company acronym). The SEB compiled findings to assess the status of missing past performance questionnaires. Telephone contact was initiated with all customers specifically mentioned in proposals to follow up on missing performance questionnaires. Telephone interviews were conducted with customers providing ratings on any question on the customer questionnaire at or below the "Good" rating. After receipt of and careful consideration of all information, the SEB considered all the relevancy and performance findings in assigning an adjective rating for each of the offeror's.

Upon receipt of the Volume 1 Mission Suitability and the Volume 2 Cost proposals, the SEB reviewed the proposal to determine that all proposals adequately satisfied the requirements of NASA FAR Supplement (NFS) 1815.305-70. None were found to be patently unacceptable, thus all warranted full evaluation.

Subsequently, each member of the SEB performed a detailed, individual review of each offeror's Mission Suitability proposal (in alphabetical order of the company acronym). Individual findings, stated in the form of individual strengths and weaknesses, were all recorded. Consultant findings were also recorded. The SEB consultants were comprised of experts in the fields of Procurement, Safety, Export Control, Science, Systems Engineering, Data Center Operations, Field Missions and Technology Development.

No SEB member reviewed the findings of other members or consultants until the SEB met in caucus. In caucus and with all SEB voting members present, the SEB evaluated each individual finding, including the findings of consultants, to determine whether to carry the finding forward as a consensus

finding. For any strength that was carried forward, the SEB determined by consensus whether the finding appreciably increased the probability of successful contract performance thus raising the strength to a "significant strength." For any weakness that was carried forward, the SEB determined by consensus whether the finding appreciably increased the risk of unsuccessful contract performance thus raising the weakness to a "significant weakness". Once consensus Mission Suitability significant strengths, strengths, significant weaknesses and weaknesses were assigned for all offers, the SEB reviewed its findings to ensure that the established criteria for strengths and weaknesses, significant or otherwise, had been consistently applied. Consensus adjective ratings were then assigned for each offeror for each Mission Suitability subfactor of each proposal. Careful consideration was given in assigning the adjective ratings considering the findings and the adjectival definitions set forth in the NFS. Consensus numerical scores were then assigned for each offeror for each Mission Suitability subfactor. The SEB reviewed its findings to ensure that the adjective and numerical scores were consistent with the NFS guidelines.

Thereafter, the SEB analyzed the proposed costs to determine reasonableness, acceptability and to confirm the costs reflected the offeror's approach in the technical proposal. The Price Analyst, performed an in depth analysis of proposed cost elements to assess cost realism. This analysis included a detailed review of each proposal in accordance with the RFP requirements. The reasonableness of the fee was determined in accordance with FAR 15.404-4. The Price Analyst, in conjunction with the SEB, prepared a probable cost for the purpose of determining best value. In accordance with the RFP, Section M.4.C, the Mission Suitability scores were adjusted for one offeror (i.e., GST) to account for a weakness associated with lack of cost realism. This completed the initial evaluation by the SEB. The evaluation procedures contained in Section M of the RFP were followed throughout the evaluation process. The SEB presented the results of the initial evaluation to the Contracting Officer in a written report and an oral presentation held on August 30, 2006.

The Contracting Officer carefully reviewed the facts presented in the report and discussed the findings with the SEB. In accordance with FAR 52.215-1(f) (4), based on the initial findings of the SEB and giving consideration to the potential outcome of a competitive range determination and discussions process, it was evident that the potential for an award without discussions existed. Therefore, no Competitive Range was determined and the SEB proceeded to schedule a selection meeting with the Source Selection Authority (SSA).

As a result, a meeting was held with me, the Source Selection Authority on September 15, 2006.

**Findings**-The following chart illustrates the top-level summary of the details that were provided, discussed and included within the SEB's written report.

#### Evaluation Results

Offeror	Mission Suitability Rating	Probable Cost Rank (lowest "1" to highest "5" cost)	Past Performance Rating
AS&M	Very Good	4	Very Good
CRC	Good	3	Good
GST	*Good	5	Good
SSAI	Excellent	1	Excellent
STC	Good	2	Good

\* Includes cost realism adjustment.

The following is a summary of the most significant evaluation findings.

### **FACTOR 1 - MISSION SUITABILITY**

Set forth in order of overall score (highest to lowest) is a summary of the final Mission Suitability findings for each of the offerors. Significant Mission Suitability strengths and weaknesses are described fully since these reflect the key discriminators within the evaluation findings; however, I gave careful consideration to all of the strengths and weaknesses included within the SEB findings.

**1. SSAI:** SSAI received a final rating of "Excellent" for this Factor with the highest score of all offerors. SSAI's final evaluation results included 8 significant strengths, numerous strengths (17), no significant weaknesses, and 2 weaknesses. Under Subfactor 1 (Understanding the Requirement), SSAI had 4 significant strengths. One noted their in-depth and detailed understanding encompassing all SOW requirements. Their discussion represented a level of understanding that goes beyond a mere understanding of the type of work required by the SOW by demonstrating a deep knowledge of the work done at LaRC - the projects, the research topics, the data center services, and contributions made to the larger scientific community. This demonstrated that they have a deep understanding of the Science driving the work and enhances the likelihood of exceptional execution and management of the total program.

Another significant strength, demonstrated a comprehensive and detailed understanding of the interrelationship between science SOW elements. This comprehensive understanding of the interrelationship between work elements is a significant strength because it enables SSAI to increase overall performance through a full understanding of the contribution of one area on the total program.

Another significant strength demonstrated a complete understanding of the complexity of the Sample Problem. The offeror demonstrated significant attention to detail beyond the scientific aspects as demonstrated in numerous areas including technical approach, schedule, resource requirements, and risks. An offeror that can analyze the schedule, cost, resource requirements, and science risks effectively and can provide this level of understanding of the sample problem significantly increases the probability of successful contract performance.

The fourth significant strength was the comprehensive approach to Efficiency and Effectiveness that greatly increased the probability of implementation of innovative practices and new technology.

Under Subfactor 2 (Management Plan and Organizational Structure), SSAI had 3 significant strengths. The proposed Organizational Structure was very simple with clear lines of communication. It was well balanced and aligned with the Science Directorate (SD) structure and offered direct communication between branch leadership and Contract group leaders. They proposed a staffing approach in the organization to address critical needs across organizational boundaries. This overall approach produced a lean and efficient organization with very clear and effective communication lines and significantly increases the probability of highly effective performance in all areas of work.

SSAI demonstrated a highly effective approach in their identification of proposed Key Positions. The proposed Contract Manager was fully committed to supporting this contract and has extensive management experience in very similar programs. The proposed Business Manager and Group Lead positions included the appropriate education and relevant experience levels. The approach demonstrated that the offeror will provide strong and effective leadership on the STARSS contract.

SSAI offered a comprehensive Total Compensation Plan. The attributes of the plan should significantly increase employee morale and the probability of effective attraction and retention of highly qualified professional personnel.

Under Subfactor 3 (Safety and Health Plan), SSAI had 1 significant strength. The SSAI proposed Safety and Health plan was comprehensive in addressing all required topics plus provided a thorough discussion of hazards and procedures to mitigate them. The proposal provided a thorough understanding of the safety issues relating to Chesapeake Lighthouse operations and demonstrated the integrated understanding of the requirement. Their approach to Safety was not an afterthought or isolated layer. This proposal increased the probability that SSAI will not only meet all applicable safety requirements but they will also successfully identify potential Safety and Health problems and effectively resolve them before they actually impact Safety and Health.

The findings support the "Excellent" Mission Suitability rating since SSAI provided a comprehensive and thorough proposal of exceptional merit with significant strengths and many strengths. No deficiency or significant weaknesses were noted.

**2. AS&M:** AS&M received a final rating of "Very Good" for this Factor with the second highest score of all offerors. AS&M's final evaluation results included 3 significant strengths, numerous strengths (15), 1 significant weakness, and numerous weaknesses (11).

AS&M had 1 significant strength under Subfactor 1 (Understanding the Requirement). The AS&M Team demonstrated a comprehensive understanding of increasing Efficiency and Effectiveness in their approach to adapt to changing requirements and respond to fluctuations in workload. The proposal provided substantial benefit to the Government in that a quick response and efficient turnaround to changing requirements will provide LaRC's SD with the desired flexibility and retention of a highly skilled workforce.

AS&M had 1 significant weakness under Subfactor 1 (Understanding the Requirement). The AS&M Team did not adequately demonstrate the Education, Experience, and Qualification requirements of the proposed personnel as required by the RFP, did not justify staffing levels and did not support the variance from the RFP specified labor categories and skill mix, which appreciably increases the risk of unsuccessful contract performance.

Under Subfactor 2 (Management Plan and Organizational Structure), AS&M had 2 significant strengths.

The first significant strength related to the commitment and qualifications of the proposed Contract Manager who also had demonstrated success as the manager of work with similar size, scope, and complexity. The experience and qualifications of the proposed Contract Manager are likely to substantially increase the probability of successful implementation and performance on the contract.

The second significant strength related to phase-in. The AS&M Team proposed to utilize the existing incumbent facility, therefore, the office and computer equipment, furnishings and communications necessary for supporting STARSS are already in place at this facility. AS&M proposed a streamlined transition process which reduces risk of interruption of service. This approach virtually eliminates changeover difficulties and greatly increases the probability of continuity of services to the Government.

The findings support the "Very Good" Mission Suitability rating since AS&M provided an over-all competent proposal with no deficiency. Several significant strengths were found and strengths outbalanced any weaknesses that existed.

**3. STC:** STC received a final rating of "Good" for this Factor with the third highest score of all offerors. STC's final evaluation results included no significant strengths, numerous strengths (14), 3 significant weaknesses, and numerous weaknesses (7).

STC received no significant strengths under Subfactor 1 (Understanding the Requirement).

Under Subfactor 1, STC received one significant weakness. The STC Team proposal did not adequately identify risk and discuss mitigation strategies. The widespread failure to properly identify the sources of risk and develop effective mitigation strategies places successful contract execution and dependable support to the SD at risk.

Under Subfactor 2, STC received one significant weakness. The STC Team did not adequately address their proposed integrated contract Organizational Structure which increased the risks that the offeror's organization will be unable to effectively initiate, perform, and monitor the work. The proposal did not define how the teammates are integrated into the organizational structure. Furthermore, the proposed lines of communication between team members did not provide sufficient detail on the communication with/between subcontractors and prime or NASA. The proposed set of responsibilities for certain positions impinged or replicated the responsibility of others. The proposal did not discuss how this potential conflict of duties will be coordinated.

Under Subfactor 3, STC received one significant weakness. The STC Team's approach to Safety and Health did not adequately address all of the requirements of NASA Procedural Requirements (NPR) 8715.3, "NASA Safety Manual," in accordance with NFS Provision 1852.223-73, "Safety and Health Plan." The lack of acknowledgement of required elements increases the risk of unsuccessful performance from a safety standpoint.

The findings support the "Good" Mission Suitability rating since STC provided a proposal that was a reasonably sound response with no deficiency. As a whole, the weaknesses not offset by strengths did not significantly detract from the proposal.

**4. CRC:** CRC received a final rating of "Good" for this Factor with the fourth highest score of all offerors. CRC's final evaluation results included 1 significant strength, numerous strengths (10), 3 significant weaknesses, and numerous weaknesses (16).

CRC had 1 significant strength under Subfactor 1 (Understanding the Requirement), which demonstrated an overall understanding of the interrelationship between the SOW requirements. The proposal comprehensively illustrated the flow of products/activities between the various SOW areas. The Government will benefit from this level of understanding in that the offeror will not require excessive Government oversight and direction in order to coordinate the contribution of the individual tasks to the total program objectives.

CRC received 3 significant weaknesses under Subfactor 1 (Understanding the Requirement).

The first significant weakness was that the proposal did not adequately demonstrate an understanding of the work relating to instrument and sensor design and development. The lack of demonstrated understanding of this technology represents a significant risk to accomplishment of related research.

The second significant weakness was the failure to demonstrate an understanding of the full requirement under Analysis, Interpretation, & Validation. CRC proposed a technical approach that was too heavily weighted towards validation. The offeror did not demonstrate an understanding of the difference between calibration and validation for satellite-retrieved data. The proposal did not discuss the requirement for scientific, engineering, and logistical support to maintain and operate COVE. A proposed staffing approach for episodic assignments would be inappropriate for this ongoing, persistent, complex task. The proposal fails to capture the full extent of the work in the element of the SOW and, therefore, represents a significant risk to proper staffing and data continuity/quality.

The third significant weakness related to the lack of detail across all of the elements of Atmospheric Science Data Center Support. The Offeror's proposal did not clearly address all the support services necessary to maintain and enhance the data center, did not address the various aspects of the

Systems Engineering requirement, did not adequately address current efforts to evolve the ASDC and gave no approach for "lights out" operation.

The findings support the "Good" Mission Suitability rating since CRC provided a proposal that was a reasonably sound response with no deficiency. As a whole, the weaknesses not offset by strengths did not significantly detract from the proposal.

**5. GST:** GST received a final rating of "Good" for this Factor with the lowest score of all offerors. GST's final evaluation results included 2 significant strengths, numerous strengths (12), 2 significant weaknesses, and numerous weaknesses (14). GST had 2 significant strengths and 1 significant weakness under Subfactor 1 (Understanding the Requirement) and 1 significant weakness under Subfactor 2 (Management Plan and Organizational Structure). After all scoring was complete, GST's Mission Suitability score was reduced by 50 points for a lack of cost realism in accordance with Section M of the RFP. The 50 point reduction did not change the "Good" rating.

Under Subfactor 1, GST's first significant strength was their demonstrated overall understanding of the interrelationship between the SOW requirements. The proposal comprehensively illustrated the flow of products/activities between the various SOW areas. The SD will benefit from this level of understanding in that the offeror will not require excessive Government oversight and direction in order to coordinate the contribution of the individual tasks to the total program objectives.

The second significant strength was that GST demonstrated a comprehensive approach and aggressive commitment to increase Efficiency and Effectiveness through various approaches.

Under Subfactor 1, GST's significant weakness was the proposed approach to the Sample Problem. The approach was heavily process-oriented but did not demonstrate understanding of the complexity involved with the task. In addition, the proposed staffing skill mix was not realistic. The approach to the sample problem appreciably increased the risk of unsuccessful performance in analyzing similar tasks.

Under Subfactor 2, GST did not demonstrate an effective integrated contract Organizational Structure. The proposed distribution of authority and responsibilities was not well balanced between management leads. Other manager duties were conflicting, were not adequately addressed in the proposed organization structure, and created a structure lacking clear lines of authority and communication. There were too many positions allocating resources for Task Orders with insufficient discussion of their authority/autonomy.

The findings support the "Good" Mission Suitability rating since GST provided a proposal that was a reasonably sound response with no deficiency. As a whole, the weaknesses not offset by strengths did not significantly detract from the proposal.

## **FACTOR 2 - PRICE/COST**

A cost analyst who was an SEB consultant evaluated the cost proposals for cost realism and price reasonableness to establish probable cost and to ensure compliance with the requirements of the RFP. As summarized in the Pricing Report, probable costs were derived from the offerors' proposals, information received from DCAA, and the cost analysis performed by the Price Analyst using technical input from the SEB. Due to the fact that offerors proposed to retain virtually all incumbent personnel, the average actual labor rate for the current workforce was used in the Government's probable cost adjustment for estimating labor cost. As a result, all offerors received this adjustment.

The following chart summarizes the results of the cost realism evaluation. The chart includes the rank order, lowest "1" to highest "5" cost for both the proposed and probable cost:



**FACTOR 2: COST / PRICE**

<b>Company</b>	<b>Proposed Cost</b>	<b>Probable Cost</b>
AS&M	5	4
CRC	4	3
GST	3	5
SSAI	1	1
STC	2	2

**AS&M-** In order to arrive at a probable cost, one adjustment was made. Due to the fact that ASM proposed to retain virtually all incumbent personnel, the average actual labor rate for the current workforce was used in the Government's probable cost adjustment for estimating labor cost. AS&M's average labor rate was adjusted. Based on the analysis of the offeror's proposal and the adjustments addressed above, the derived probable cost was determined to be realistic for the offeror's proposed approach to achieving the technical objectives.

**CRC-** In order to arrive at a probable cost, one adjustment was made. Due to the fact that CRC proposed to retain virtually all incumbent personnel, the average actual labor rate for the current workforce was used in the Government's probable cost adjustment for estimating labor cost. CRC's average labor rate was adjusted. Based on the analysis of the offeror's proposal and the adjustments addressed above, the derived probable cost was determined to be realistic for the offeror's proposed approach to achieving the technical objectives

**GST-** In order to arrive at a probable cost, one adjustment was made. Due to the fact that GST proposed to retain virtually all incumbent personnel, the average actual labor rate for the current workforce was used in the Government's probable cost adjustment for estimating labor cost. GST's average labor rate was adjusted. Based on the analysis of the offeror's proposal and the adjustments addressed above, the derived probable cost was determined to be realistic for the offeror's proposed approach to achieving the technical objectives. As mentioned previously, in accordance with the RFP, Section M.4.C, the Mission Suitability score was adjusted to account for a weakness related to junior level staffing in some areas which contributed to a lack of cost realism.

**SSAI-** In order to arrive at a probable cost, two adjustments were made. Due to the fact that SSAI proposed to retain virtually all incumbent personnel, the average actual labor rate for the current workforce was used in the Government's probable cost adjustment for estimating labor cost. SSAI's average labor rate was adjusted. In addition, the costs associated with an option for additional facility square footage was deemed appropriate. Based on the analysis of the offeror's proposal and the adjustments addressed above, the derived probable cost was determined to be realistic for the offeror's proposed approach to achieving the technical objectives.

**STC-** In order to arrive at a probable cost, two adjustments were made. Due to the fact that STC proposed to retain virtually all incumbent personnel, the average actual labor rate for the current workforce was used in the Government's probable cost adjustment for estimating labor cost. STC's average labor rate was adjusted. In addition, costs erroneously omitted from the total cost for the Schedule D Off-site Facility Cost were adjusted. Based on the analysis of the offeror's proposal and the adjustments addressed above, the derived probable cost was determined to be realistic for the offeror's proposed approach to achieving the technical objectives.



### **FACTOR 3 - PAST PERFORMANCE**

In accordance with the RFP, evaluation of each offeror's past performance related to technical, schedule, cost, management, occupational health, safety, security, mission success, and subcontracting goals using the following:

- Evaluation of each offeror's written narrative.
- Evaluation of customer questionnaires as completed and returned by the offeror's customers.
- Evaluation of NASA Form 1680 from NASA Past Performance database.
- Evaluation of the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS)

The evaluation results are illustrated by the following chart and narrative.

<b>Offeror</b>	<b>Overall</b>	<b>Performance</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
AS&M	Very Good	Very Good	Highly Relevant
CRC	Good	Very Good	Relevant
GST	Good	Very Good	Relevant
SSAI	Excellent	Excellent	Highly Relevant
STC	Good	Very Good	Relevant

**AS&M** received an overall adjective rating of "Very Good". AS&M team has demonstrated very effective performance that is fully responsive to contract requirements, with contract requirements accomplished in a timely, efficient, and economical manner for the most part. Past performance questionnaire ratings on questions for the AS&M Team range from excellent to good performance, with a preponderance of excellent ratings for AS&M. A major subcontractor received more ratings of very good and good combined, than excellent ratings and some performance concerns were reported by their customers. The AS&M Team has performed contracts that are comprehensive and highly relevant coverage of the SOW areas. The Team's relevant experience is of comparable scope, content, and complexity to STARSS. The proposed roles and responsibilities of each team member are consistent with their experience.

**CRC** received an overall adjective rating of "Good". The CRC team demonstrated very effective performance which was fully responsive to contract requirements, with contract requirements accomplished in a timely, efficient, and economical manner for the most part. Past performance questionnaire ratings on questions for the CRC Team range from excellent to satisfactory performance, with a preponderance of excellent ratings for CRC and a subcontractor. Some performance issues with other team members were reported by their customers. One subcontractor received more very good, good and satisfactory ratings combined, than excellent ratings. Another subcontractor received a significant number of excellent ratings however received good and satisfactory ratings for relevant work. The CRC team provides evidence of relevant coverage in content of the individual SOW areas, however, the contracts are dissimilar in size or complexity. The proposed roles and responsibilities of team member are in some cases inconsistent with their experience.

**GST** received an overall adjective rating of "Good". The GST team has demonstrated very effective performance which was fully responsive to contract requirements, with contract requirements accomplished in a timely, efficient, and economical manner for the most part. Past performance questionnaire ratings on questions for the GST Team range from excellent to satisfactory performance, with a preponderance of excellent ratings for GST and a subcontractor. GST had some

performance issues reported by their customers. Other subcontractors received slightly more excellent ratings than very good, good and satisfactory ratings, combined. The GST Team provides evidence of relevant coverage of the individual SOW areas with one exception. The proposed roles and responsibilities of one team member was inconsistent with their experience.

**SSAI** received an overall adjective rating of "Excellent". SSAI past performance has been exemplary, with contract requirements achieved in a timely, efficient, and economical manner. Past performance questionnaire ratings on questions for SSAI range from excellent to good, with a preponderance of excellent and only one questionnaire element rated good. SSAI has highly relevant experience by performance on contracts that are similar in content and complexity to the full breadth and depth of the areas of work required by the STARSS and experience that was very similar to the STARSS contract effort.

**STC** received an overall adjective rating of "Good". The STC team demonstrated very effective performance which was fully responsive to contract requirements, with contract requirements accomplished in a timely, efficient, and economical manner for the most part. Past performance questionnaire ratings on questions for the STC Team range from excellent to good performance, with a preponderance of excellent ratings for the subcontractors. STC received more excellent ratings than very good and good ratings combined. STC had some performance issues reported by their customers. The STC Team does have highly relevant experience in certain SOW areas and limited experience in other areas of the SOW. The offeror's past performance was not highly similar in size, content and complexity to the range and depth of the SOW's requirements.

### **BASIS FOR SOURCE SELECTION**

Prior to the SEB presentation to me on September 15, 2006, I received a copy of their presentation and a package that contained all underlying SEB findings. I also considered the requirement for the Source Selection Authority to comparatively assess the proposals against all source selection criteria in the solicitation. I carefully considered the information that I received prior to the board's briefing and I carefully questioned the board regarding aspects of various findings during the briefing. After the SEB's presentation that covered all significant strengths, strengths, weaknesses and significant weaknesses, the assembled members and I considered the relative importance of the evaluation criteria. Cost, Past Performance, and Mission Suitability were of equal weight and, together, Past Performance and Mission Suitability were significantly more important than cost. The offeror with the strongest proposal in terms of Mission Suitability, SSAI, also had the strongest proposal in terms of Past Performance and it had the lowest probable cost.

I considered the discussion that we had during the briefing regarding Past Performance. The next closest rated offeror to SSAI in the area of Past Performance was AS&M. The basis for SSAI's superior rating was clear to me and resulted from the strength of their performance that was reflected by the consistently excellent ratings that the company received from its customers. The team explained the circumstances surrounding the one questionnaire element rated "good" that SSAI received, and it was clear to me that it did not detract from their overall rating of excellent that was based on an overwhelming consistency of excellent ratings. The team also fully justified their determination that SSAI's performance was highly relevant, citing particular contracts. On the other hand, AS&M also received consistently excellent performance ratings and demonstrated highly relevant performance. The board explained that a highly significant subcontractor on AS&M's team had recently received past performance ratings based on very similar work that were very good but that were also a level below excellent. Based on this subcontractor's very good but not excellent ratings, the board determined that AS&M's overall performance rating was Very Good. Considering this, I understood and concurred in the board's ratings; however, I concluded that even if the SSAI and AS&M past performance ratings approached equality, the strength of SSAI's proposal in terms of Mission Suitability, as discussed below, and their lower probable cost reflect that SSAI offers the best value. I also considered the three other offerors' Past Performance ratings and the board and I

discussed the bases for those ratings. Based on the findings and the SEB discussion, I am convinced that SSAI's Past Performance provides significantly greater benefit to the Government than that provided by the other four offerors.

Turning to Mission Suitability, it was again evident that SSAI proposed the strongest approach and AS&M received the next highest rating by a wide margin over all other offerors. In comparing the two highest rated offerors within this factor, I considered that within the most heavily weighted subfactor, Understanding the Requirement, SSAI received four significant strengths. One represented their understanding of the interrelationship between the SOW areas which indicated that they clearly understand how work within each particular technical area contributes to the other areas of work and to mission success. AS&M had several strengths that represented their solid understanding in various SOW areas; however, they did not receive a comparable strength for their understanding of the work in the same integrated manner as demonstrated by SSAI. Another SSAI significant strength reflected their comprehensive understanding of the work in all SOW areas. This was consistent with their lack of weaknesses with one exception that related to their proposed skill mix for Mission/Payload/Instrument Operations. I noticed that AS&M also had a weakness relative to an aspect of Mission/Payload/Instrument Operations. I also considered that AS&M had several other weaknesses relative to various SOW areas. SSAI had a superior response to the sample problem. While AS&M received a strength for their effective response to the sample problem, SSAI received a significant strength related to their complete understanding of the complexity of the sample problem, including significant levels of detail beyond the scientific aspects, a detailed technical approach and an excellent risk assessment and mitigation plan. I considered the significant strengths related to efficiency and effectiveness received by both offerors and concluded that both offerors' approaches are of comparable value in this area. Finally, I noted that while SSAI received no significant weaknesses, AS&M received a significant weakness relating to proposed personnel and staffing levels. Overall, I concluded that within this most highly weighted subfactor, SSAI's proposal represented a significantly more valuable understanding and approach than that provided by AS&M.

Considering the next most important evaluation subfactor, Management Plan and Organizational Structure, the SEB findings demonstrated that SSAI was rated slightly higher than AS&M. I noted that SSAI received three significant strengths and AS&M received two significant strengths within this subfactor. I reviewed the significant strengths related to SSAI's key positions, organizational structure and compensation plan and to AS&M's contract manager and strong transition plan. The SSAI significant strength regarding key positions and the AS&M significant strength regarding the contract manager are of comparable value. I believe that certain features of the SSAI compensation plan will significantly increase employee morale, attraction and retention of qualified personnel and increase the likelihood of exceptional performance on the contract. I concluded that the enduring nature of the SSAI superior compensation plan and organizational approach are of more value than AS&M's strong plan for phase-in. I therefore concluded that the value of the SSAI proposal in this subfactor is somewhat higher than the AS&M proposal.

Finally it is clear from discussions with the SEB that SSAI's significant strength relative to safety and health was well justified based on their comprehensive response in this area but also based on the manner in which they addressed safety and health throughout their technical approach. This represented an approach to Safety and Health that was more valuable than that provided by AS&M.

Considering the above, it is clear to me that SSAI provides significantly greater value relative to Mission Suitability than the next strongest proposal which was submitted by AS&M. Also considering their "Excellent" Past Performance and low probable cost of \$128.6M, I conclude that SSAI's proposal represents greater value than the AS&M proposal. It follows that SSAI also provides greater value in terms of Mission Suitability and Past Performance than the other lower rated offerors and a comparison of their strengths and weaknesses to SSAI confirms this.

Since SSAI has the strongest proposal in terms of Mission Suitability and Past Performance as well as the lowest probable cost, I hereby select SSAI for award.

I am convinced that the SEB conducted a thorough, fair, and objective evaluation of all proposals in accordance with the established Evaluation Criteria.

*Lesa Roe*

Lesa Roe  
Source Selection Authority

9/22/06

Date